



position yourself as the leader in your niche

FIVE ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR ARCHITECTS, BUILDERS & DESIGNERS

Dwelling
Creative *marketing strategy*



“Be genuine, be remarkable, be worth connecting with.”

- Seth Godin

Hello,

Congratulations for downloading this free guide. You’ve taken a valuable step toward steering your business toward positioning yourself as the leader in your niche. I created this guide because I’ve seen so many talented architects and builders struggle to find higher quality clients and more freedom. The process takes time, dedication and won’t happen overnight, but with the right mindset you will be surprised and delighted with the results.

The number one factor in connecting with the right client is gaining trust with genuine messaging that highlights your character, values and unique creative genius.

This guide will help you to do that by:

- Curating a portfolio and strategy that attracts the right audience.
- Optimizing your website for on-going, organic, targeted traffic.
- Mining your experience for storytelling elements that engage and convert.
- Connecting with the right people.

They don’t teach you how to run a business in design school, and I’m betting you didn’t get into building because you like marketing.

As a licensed Landscape Architect who practiced for 10 years, I know where you’re coming from. **Unsatisfied with hopping from project to project, not knowing where the next client was coming from**, I dug into marketing in a serious way, and loved it. Since then, I’ve distilled more than 15 years of experience working with architects and builders into 5 essential steps to building a satisfying and inspiring design or build business. Each step includes an exercise that will move you measurably closer to your goals.

Melissa Lind

Dwelling
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what's included in **THIS GUIDE**

When people begin looking for someone to build or design a custom home they are looking for their next life transformation. Wherever your clients find you, they want all of the stars to line up.

When you invest time and resources into getting the following aspects of your business aligned, you will naturally, and more effectively connect with, and draw your ideal clients to you.

1 PORTFOLIO CURATION

2 GOOGLE MY BUSINESS REVIEWS + MAPS

3 BLOGGING

4 SOCIAL MEDIA

5 NETWORKING



#1

PORTFOLIO CURATION

Matching the quality of your portfolio to the quality of work you want to be doing is how you communicate to your ideal clients that you are what they are looking for.

Curate your web & Houzz portfolio so it only shows your best work. If you have old photographs that don't represent the kind of work you want to be doing, take them out. Only upload photographs of the best quality.

Compare your photographs to work you see on Houzz and improve the quality with every new project. Hire a professional, or if you're interested in doing the photography yourself check out this post about [How to choose a camera for architectural photography](#).

Document not only the finished homes, but also your design and construction process, your relationship with designers and builders, your crew and your clients to show your storyline.

HOT TIP: Wedding photographers are a great lifestyle photography option for price and style.



#2

GOOGLE REVIEWS + MAPS

Google reviews are a signal to search engines that communicates trustworthiness and authority. **It's a fact, Google trusts your clients more than it trusts you.**

Not many businesses take advantage of Google's My Business Reviews because they are not easy to figure out. But with a little effort, this is the most impactful and underused hack to quickly up-level your business and build awareness.

Here's how to get started; send an email to all of your subcontractors and suppliers asking if they would submit a review for you on Google. After you've had all of your associates submit reviews, send a similar email to your clients so that the client reviews are on top.

As you complete new projects make it standard operating procedure to follow up with clients and peers with review requests on Google and Houzz.

For more step-by-step guidance on exactly how to get the best testimonials, click here for my post [How when and why to get 5 star reviews.](#)

Attain more Google authority with maps. Having a live Google map of your business location and service area in your footer (so that it is on every page) provides significant Google juice for anyone searching for a builder or architect in their area.

Voila, you've just taken an enormous step toward managing your on line reputation.

HOT TIP: Did you know that Google My Business reviews that include the searched-for keyword are the second-most influential factor for Google ranking. The number one factor in Google ranking is organic SEO, which brings me to blogging.



#3

BLOGGING

I often hear from very talented architects and builders who are surprised that their less talented competitors are busier or are receiving more public praise and awards. The difference is marketing.

One of the most effective forms of marketing is blogging because it provides an educational platform to establish yourself as the authority in your specialty *and* it is great for organic Search Engine Optimization.

The difference between being ranked #3 and being ranked #1 is often the amount of keywords related to your industry and area on your website. To understand keywords, imagine what your ideal clients would be typing into Google to find you. For example “best custom home builder in Austin”.

Not only are the actual keywords important, but how recently they’ve been added to the site. Google’s job is to connect a query with the most relevant information. Businesses with both a solid history and a current presence of reviews and posts will win the rank.

If you’re not a writer, find someone who is. Have them interview you to get authentic, personal anecdotes about your work so that it is different than anything else on the web. Your prospective clients want to know what the process of working with you is like. These posts give them an insider’s view without having to commit to meeting you.

The people who connect with you will want more information, the people who don’t, will look elsewhere saving you time to focus on the work you love the most. One blog per month is a good start, as it becomes easier, do two a month and integrate them into a regular email campaign.

HOT TIP: Choose topics you are genuinely interested in or you need to do research about for work. Or delegate it to your talented crew; the information is good for everyone.

Not sure what to write? Check out this [post for content creation](#).



#4

SOCIAL MEDIA

You may be thinking you don't have the time. I understand, I am a business owner too. However, if you're not steering your ship, you'll end up wherever the wind blows. This is ok of course, if that's the adventure you're looking for, but if you're trying to get somewhere specific, steering the course is well worth the effort.

While a great website is necessary, It's no longer enough. You need something to drive traffic **TO** your website.

People are on social media everyday (they are not on your website everyday) they use social as a means of selecting their brand loyalties.

Intimidated? Start small. Pick one social media platform that you are interested in. The best options for architects and builders are Instagram, Houzz, Youtube, and Pinterest. Social media is something that takes some time to find your voice and gather an audience. Dedicate resources to the practice; you are planting seeds for future growth. If you want the nitty gritty on each social platform I have the information for you in my post: [Social Media, the good, the bad and the huh?](#)

Already have an Instagram account but wonder how to make it better? [Here's a post to help you curate your feed](#)

HOT TIPS: Use a time-saving app called Facebook Page for your phone that gives you a list of all the new comments on your Facebook and Instagram posts so you can easily respond, or manage them through facebook on your desktop computer. Use [Later.com](#) to schedule posts for the entire month. They will auto post to your favorite platforms.



#5

NETWORKING

When you've taken the time to do all of the previous steps you are now in position to make valuable personal connections and refer them confidently to your website.

Make a list of 12 people in your community who you know would make a difference in your business. Make a plan to meet one a month. Put the best architects and builders first on your list. When they get busy, they want to have good people to refer projects to. If you can handle referrals professionally, they will likely want to collaborate on projects. It's always good to know who the competition is, they may become your best source of leads.

High achieving Realtors know what is happening in the market and who is buying new lots. Art gallery owners, ambitious business owners, politicians, luxury car dealers, movers and shakers. You know who they are, get them on your radar. Asking for an interview for your blog is a clever way to get original content on your blog and get the attention of people you want to know.

Where can you meet these people? The chamber of commerce is an easy place to start. You can volunteer at an organization like Habitat for Humanity, but it doesn't need to be that literal. You might want to do something totally different than your work. Look for what is available, and if you don't find anything that rings your bell, start something new. It could be as simple as an activity that your target demographic enjoys.

The National Association of Home Builders gives one Custom Home Builder of The Year. The qualifications include: professionalism, leadership, innovation and creativity in crafting unique custom homes.

Leadership is often some kind of community work, this is the piece that sets the Builder of the Year apart from the rest. What kind of work could you be doing in your community that you would enjoy and connect you to people who are making things happen?



ACTIONABLE

Set aside one day a week for marketing. Select the same day every week and mark it off your calendar. Or hire someone to do it for you. Working on your business instead of in your business is the difference between consistently attracting higher quality clients and working the same kind of jobs over and over. The quality effort you put into marketing has a direct correlation to the return on investment you will receive.

Batch your tasks for efficiency. One day a week do all of your social media. The next week work on your Houzz profile. The next week put together a blog post.

Is it worth the effort? A resounding YES. Zipf's law, a mathematical statistic, proves that positioning yourself as number one results in ten times the return on investment as being number 10. The work you do is important. In the history of the world, there has never been tools available in such abundance to easily share your story with the world.

You may have read this kind of information before, and the problem is not wanting to do it, but finding the time. If this is the case, we can help. Dwelling Creative has hand selected a team of independent design professionals who specialize in their particular fields of photography, graphic design, search engine optimization, social media, marketing specializing in architects and builders. [Schedule a complimentary 60 minute phone call](#) with me to see how we can help you attract more higher quality clients, so you can focus on the work you love most.

